VLADAS SAKALYS, PROMINENT LITHUANIAN DISSIDENT OF SOVIET PERIOD, DIES UNEXPECTEDLY

VILNIUS, Aug 15, BNS - On August 13 in Vilnius, Vladas Šakalys, a leading dissident of the Soviet period, died suddenly at the age of 54. Sakalys spent nearly twenty years in Soviet prisons and camps. He was one of the initiators of a group of 45 Balts in 1979 who denounced the Molotov-Ribentrop pact and demanded that it be revoked. When the authorities began arresting members of this group in 1980, Sakalys crossed the Soviet border and Finland by foot, requesting political asylum in Sweden -- an event which attracted international attention at that time.

Later he settled in the United States where he seemed to remain a target for the KGB. In Los Angelos he taught history in a Lithuanian Saturday school and edited a Lithuanian newspaper. Šakalys also organized various events in support of Lithuanian and Baltic independence in the United States. The former dissident arrived in Lithuania once again a month ago and died unexpectedly on Sunday of a burst aorta, a spokesman for the parliamentary opposition said. Sakalys was a member of the oppositional Conservative Party.

BUSINESSWOMAN KILLED IN VILNIUS

VILNIUS, Aug 14, BNS - On Saturday a Lithuanian entrepreneur, Natalija Jurgelevičienė, was shot dead with a handgun, fired point blank. Lietuvos Rytas reports that the woman was killed late in the evening as she left a garage not far from the center of the city after parking her car. Jurgeleviciene, 36, was involved in the non-ferrous metals trade and had her own company, "Natalija". The police believe that the murder may be linked to her company's activity. This was second murder of a wealthy woman this year in Lithuania. In May the director of the largest outdoor market, Gariunai, was killed outside her home. The murderer has not yet been apprehended.